

Position Statement of the Massachusetts Chapter of The Nature Conservancy on Terrestrial Wind Energy

This position statement applies only to terrestrial wind energy facilities and does not address offshore wind siting. The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts (the Conservancy) is involved in the ongoing process related to drafting an Ocean Management Plan which will address the siting of wind energy facilities offshore.

POSITION STATEMENT

As climate change is a major stressor on global biodiversity and wind power may represent an effective technology and strategy to help achieve significant net reductions of carbon dioxide emissions and minimize climate change, the Conservancy supports the use of wind energy facilities when appropriately sited and operated.

At the same time, inappropriately sited and operated wind energy facilities will have adverse impacts on globally significant biodiversity (species and ecosystems) by fragmenting significant natural habitats, disrupting wildlife behavior and increasing mortality rates for sensitive species, including birds and bats.

Given the potential impacts to biodiversity posed by inappropriately sited and operated wind energy facilities, the Conservancy will advocate for science-based standards, practices and guidelines that include:

- Assessing the impacts of siting potential wind energy facilities using spatial data to define ecologically sensitive areas;
- Conducting adequate pre-construction monitoring to assess the potential impacts to avian species and post-construction monitoring to assess actual impacts to avian species and inform adaptive management;
- Maintaining existing environmental protections in current laws and regulations to avoid, minimize or, if necessary, mitigate the adverse impacts;
- Developing protections that may not already be included in state laws or regulations for impacts on ecologically sensitive areas related to the siting of wind power facilities;
- Providing robust opportunities for participation and representation from the land and water conservation organizations in the development of the Commonwealth's policies related to wind energy facilities; and,
- Recognizing that both public and private conservation lands have been protected to safeguard a range of public benefits, including ecologically significant resources, valuable ecosystem services and biological diversity that make many of these areas inappropriate for wind energy facilities.